

STATE CANVASS Gaps In Prohibition Reasoning.

The opposition to the proposed prohibition amendment might well afford to go before the people at the August election upon the naked issue that it seeks to abridge the citizen's right to regulate his personal habits upon arbitrary grounds, in no wise conflicting with his neighbor's rights of person or property. It might well ask the voters of the state, before acting upon this matter in their sovereign capacity, to pause and consider well the warrant they have for disturbing vested rights in property acquired under sanction of law, and for the destruction of which the advocates of the amendment do not propose to make one cent of compensation to the owners, in breaking away from British rule, arbitrary and most age-old, we deposit in our newly found ark of freedom what of that government's laws and traditions was deemed most valuable for the conservation of personal and property rights, adding such requirements and guarantees as were then believed would forever place them beyond peradventure measured by the few or the many. If this amendment prevails, we shall have legislated away rights which no parliament that has sat at Westminster for two hundred years would have dared disturb, in the closing of breweries and distilleries without making compensation to the owners. The arbitrary exercise of irresponsible power is always alarming; but it is never seen at its worst, until it is found intruded behind the physical force represented by a numerical majority. And when this assertion of power takes on the form of organic law, the situation becomes fraught with four-fold peril. Our people cannot recur too often to the principle which haloed their own rebellion, viz., that there are certain rights which inhere in the individual, and of which power cannot rob him, another it come of the usurpation of the undivided multitude. And to him who is dispossessed of such right, it matters nothing whether the spoliation is accomplished by organic or by statutory law.

There are, however, objections to the practical workings of prohibition which are scarcely less alarming, and which are more patent to common observation. A recognized and accredited leader of the prohibition movement, in a recent published letter, attempts to relieve the public of its jealous fears, by the announcement that the mere adoption of the amendment will work neither benefit nor injury, inasmuch as legislation will be required to render it operative. Most true, so is the dynamite bomb innocent, until the happening of a foreseen and provided-for contingency till the adjournment of the legislature next assembling after the adoption of the amendment is the bomb, and the two bear to each other and to the consequences which follow the relation of primary and proximate causes. Conceding, then, that the legislative conscience is to be the measure of its action, is it not better, then, to suppress the bomb in suppressing the maker, rather than leave a dangerous play thing in the hands of future legislatures?

Upon the same idea of gently chloroforming the voters into insensibility, they are told, that, after the amendment shall have been adopted, it is to be construed merely as a means of stopping the liquor traffic and, whatever they (the legislature) may do, they cannot keep the owner of a vineyard from making wine for his own consumption. If this latter proposition be true; if one, being the owner of a vineyard, may convert the expressed juice of grapes into a liquor which produces intoxication, "for known consumption," then he must give it away, at pleasure, to his neighbors for the amendment itself proposes to go no further than to prohibit the "manufacture, sale and exchange." The effect of the proposition is to transfer drinking from the saloons where it may be regarded with wholesome restrictions, and where the chances of corrupting the youth of the country are reduced to minimum to the homes of the drunk, thus poisoning society at its very source. This may be what prohibition means to the play-southerns whence Longfellow despatched to us, and who hope to profit by its success; but it will scarcely jingle with the humor of the anti-prohibition cavalry. It is the strongest. The ladies and babies are just as sweet as they can be, but alas! they don't vote.

We say to the Denison News that the best plan is for the editor to remain at his post during an exciting political campaign. If he does the bo-dutch, buck nigger and the Irish will not get him into a scrape, at least not one that he need deny so utterly.

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